

Georgia[®] Department of Community Affairs

April 2015

DCA remembers 15-year Housing Division veteran Vanessa Adams



The DCA staff mourns the recent loss of a beloved friend and loyal team member. Vanessa Adams, from DCA's Housing Division, passed away unexpectedly at her home on April 2.

"Vanessa was well respected by her colleagues within DCA and in the affordable housing industry. She was a wonderful person, an exceptional leader, and a great friend to many of us," said Carmen Chubb, deputy commissioner of housing.

After working with the United States General Accounting office where she performed audits of federal programs, Vanessa began her career at DCA in September of 2000. She was initially

NEWS AND EVENTS

DCA Maintains Top "AAA" Rating

Stays among only nine housing agencies nationwide with highest possible rating



Members of DCA's Executive Team and Housing Group held its annual meeting with rating agency Standard and Poor's (S&P) in New York City in early April to discuss the single family revenue mortgage program, its investment policies, organizational structure, and bond transactions. DCA's "AAA" rating from S&P, which is the highest possible rating, was reaffirmed during the meeting. GHFA, the legal issuer of the bonds and whose programs are administered by DCA, is one of only nine AAA-rated housing finance agencies in the nation.

In addition to the rating affirmation, the team met to price its latest bond transaction. The bond transaction, 2015 Series A, priced on April 7 and 8 and closed on April 21. The bond proceeds generated from the bond

hired as a senior performance auditor in the Office of Affordable Housing. As a senior auditor, Vanessa was responsible for the implementation and design of the DCA internal audit program for contract administration of Georgia's Project-Based Section 8 program.

In 2012 she was promoted to Director of Portfolio Management in the Housing Finance Division. In this position Vanessa supervised a staff of 15 and oversaw the Multifamily Asset Management and Compliance departments responsible for DCA's affordable multifamily portfolio consisting of more than 95,000 units of affordable housing and more than 290 loans totaling \$551 million.

She held multiple certifications including: Certified Internal Auditor, Certified Occupancy Specialist, Housing Credit Certified Professional, Certified HOME Program Specialist, and Certified HOME Program Specialist - Regulations. Vanessa was a frequent speaker at industry conferences and events and a tireless advocate in promoting affordable housing opportunities for Georgia's citizens. She was a graduate of Davidson College and received a Master's degree in business administration from the University of Massachusetts-Lowell.

According to her supervisors, Vanessa easily achieved every certification that she undertook and was known at DCA for her professionalism, knowledge and leadership.

DCA Commissioner Camila Knowles said of Vanessa, "Her faithful service at DCA is complimented by the genuine support and concern she displayed for those around her."

Vanessa leaves a 12-year-old daughter, Alex.

**Fair Housing Month
recognized during April**

pricing will be used to finance low cost mortgages to first-time homebuyers under DCA's Georgia Dream Homeownership Program.

2015 Series A was a \$103 million bond deal comprised of \$88.9 million in bonds to make new mortgages and \$14.5 million in bonds to refund higher interest rate bonds currently in the GHFA portfolio. DCA was able to successfully take advantage of historically low interest rates on municipal bonds in order to lock in refunding savings estimated to be approximately \$2.1 million. The bond yield generated from pricing equaled 3.258%.

CitiGroup was the Lead Senior Manager responsible for marketing the bonds to interested investors, with Bank of America Merrill Lynch acting as Co-Senior Manager. The Co-Managers assisting in the sale were JP Morgan, RBC Capital Markets, and Raymond James.

Because of the successful pricing, DCA can continue to offer very low and competitive interest rates to first time homebuyers. As of April 16, Georgia Dream rates are 3.625% for loans without down payment assistance and 3.875% for loans with down payment assistance.

Commissioner Knowles Announces DCA's New Community Services Division

DCA Commissioner Camila Knowles made a big announcement at the Georgia Economic Developers Association (GEDA) monthly luncheon on April 20 in Atlanta about the creation of DCA's new Community Services Division. The division will be staffed with one regional representative for each of the state's 12 service delivery regions.

Knowles said, "This new division creates smaller territories for each regional representative, so they can spend time in all of our communities. Our focus is on better customer service, with the goal of providing equity in access to DCA's programs and services to all communities. With only one contact per region, we feel we'll be taking a great step in the right direction."

Saralyn Stafford, who has served on the DCA team for 13 years in a variety of roles, and most recently as the Division Director for Community Development, will lead the new Community Services Division. Corinne Thornton will lead this team as office director, while also serving Region 4. The new division also includes the work of the Community Development Block Grant compliance officers, under the direction of Glenn Misner.

Rusty Haygood, who joined the DCA staff last October after serving in economic development in Oconee County, will step into Stafford's former role heading up the Community Development Division.



What is Fair Housing Month & why is fair housing important?

On April 11, 1968, just seven days after the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Fair Housing Act. Every year since then, celebrations of Fair Housing in April have continued to grow. On March 11, 2013, Georgia's Governor Nathan Deal proclaimed April 2013 as Fair Housing and Equal Employment Opportunity Month throughout the state.

Prior to the enactment of this historic act, restrictive covenants such as these were commonplace: "...hereafter no part of said property or any portion thereof shall be...occupied by any person not of the Caucasian race, it being intended hereby to restrict the use of said property...against occupancy as owners or tenants of any portion of said property for resident or other purposes by people of the Negro or Mongolian race." In addition to these "hidden" covenants, blatant signage would be posted stating, "White only." Injustices such as these still exist today, and DCA is committed to eradicating them.

Fair Housing is designed to give housing choice to all persons regardless of race, sex, religion, disability, national origin, color and familial status. Without fair housing, persons in protected classes have been denied the opportunity to freely exercise their housing choice.

At DCA we are tasked to take steps proactively to overcome historic patterns of segregation, promote fair housing choice, and foster inclusive communities for all.

DCA, as a recipient and disburser of federal funds, takes seriously its duty to ensure that public funds are not spent in a way which encourages, subsidizes or results in fair housing discrimination. In



Region 1	Patrick Vickers
Region 2	Kathy Papa
Region 3	John VanBrunt
Region 4	Corinne Thornton
Region 5	(temp) Kathy Papa
Region 6	Tonya Mole
Region 7	Tina Hutcheson
Region 8	Jo Childers
Region 9	Lynn Ashcraft
Region 10	(temp) Jo Childers
Region 11	Kelly Lane
Region 12	Jennifer Fordham

[Click here to view the state map and representatives](#) list in detail by regions.

recognition of Fair Housing Month and to affirmatively further fair housing, DCA has on its website home page a Fair Housing announcement and two surveys as part of its Analysis of Impediments. [Click here for access to the surveys.](#)

Additionally, the Rental Assistance Compliance Department hosted a Fair Housing Training on April 29 at the State Bar of Georgia.

PlanFirst Applications Due May 15

This year's PlanFirst applications are due by close of business on May 15. PlanFirst recognizes and rewards communities of any size throughout Georgia that have clearly demonstrated an established pattern of developing and successfully implementing their Local Comprehensive Plans. [Click here to access the application](#) and the list of incentives available to PlanFirst communities. For more information or questions, contact adriane.wood@dca.ga.gov.



GET to KNOW
DCA
*April Topic of the
Month*

State Small Business

Georgia DCA-hosted 2015 National Main Streets Conference sees largest attendance in seven years



DCA Commissioner Camila Knowles, pictured far left, addressed more than 1,300 conference attendees sharing her own memories of growing up in small-town Georgia. At right, DCA Downtown Development staffers Jessica Reynolds, Billy Peppers, and Leigh Burns celebrate at the end of the record-breaking conference.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs, in conjunction with the National Main Street Center, welcomed over 1,500 attendees, 300 of whom were from our home state, to Atlanta for the 2015 National Main Streets Conference March 30-April 2. This event boasted record-breaking numbers, with the highest attendance since the 2008 financial recession. From as far away as Washington state and numerous Canadian provinces, Main Street managers, planners, preservationists, elected officials and community leaders enjoyed southern hospitality in the heart of our capital city.

The national conference, held at the Omni Hotel and CNN Center, featured 90 educational sessions and 14 mobile tours visiting six of our Classic Georgia Main Street communities. Each tour community successfully pulled out all the stops for our guests and provided gift bags, snacks, and immeasurable volunteer staffing efforts.

More than 30 DCA employees supported the efforts on site after almost a year of preparation by the Downtown Development staff. Both Governor Nathan Deal and DCA Commissioner Knowles welcomed more than 1,300 attendees at the opening plenary at the beautiful Fox Theatre on March 30.

The staff of the Office of Downtown Development wishes to extend their most sincere thanks for the efforts and support of Commissioner Knowles and the numerous fellow DCA employees who supported this undertaking for the Georgia Main Street Program.

To see the full program and to learn more about the NMSC Conference, visit nationalmainstreetsconference.org.

Credit Incentives (SSBCI):

Helping strengthen existing loan and equity programs and creating new programs that support financing for Georgia's small businesses

DCA's State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) creates a significant opportunity for state economic development agencies and Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) to increase the availability of small business credit.

Georgia is one of the top ten states in the U.S. that deployed the most SSBCI funds by the dollar amount in 2014.

SSBCI was created when President Obama signed into law the Small Business Jobs Act in 2010. Through SSBCI, the Treasury Department will award nearly \$1.5 billion to state programs across the country that support small businesses, including small manufacturers. SSBCI continues to help small businesses grow and create jobs. More than \$1.1 billion is now at work across the country to spur small business lending and investments.

SSBCI is designed to help draw new private sector lending or investment in small companies by leveraging private capital along with the federal support offered by the program. SSBCI funding is not repaid to the federal government. Instead, to help even more small businesses, the funds from repaid loans and investments remain with the states to be redeployed locally. A recent report shows that, as of December 2014, participants have recycled \$65,222,615 to support additional investments.

For more details on SSBCI, contact Program Manager Holly Hunt at holly.hunt@dca.ga.gov.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCING

March Financial Awards

Region 2: White County

- A \$358,501 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Will spur \$5.5 million in private investment and more than \$94,000 in public investment within 24 months
- Will create 50 new jobs through Employee Incentive Program (EIP)
- White County will use the EIP grant funds to assist with the construction of road improvements to serve the proposed Black Bear Treatment Center

Region 6: Twiggs County

- A \$38,500 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in Immediate Threat and Danger (ITD) funds
- 1,033 people will benefit -- of whom 812 are low to moderate income
- The City of Jeffersonville requested assistance to repair a water main at the intersection of US Hwy 80 and Everette Circle and reimbursement for the installation of two shut off valves

Region 9: Laurens County

- A \$300,000 Economic Development Growth and Expansion (EDGE) grant award from OneGeorgia Authority funds to the City of Dublin and Laurens County Development Authority
- Valmeira Glass USA Corp. will create 150 jobs and invest \$20 million within 60 months
- Grant will assist with construction in the location of Valmeira's warehousing and manufacturing facility

UPCOMING EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

HomeSafe Georgia events in May

HomeSafe
Georgia®

Free
Mortgage
Payment
Assistance

HomeSafe Georgia is a free, state government program to help homeowners who are unemployed, underemployed or face other types of financial hardships save their homes from foreclosure. There is no cost to apply and no fee if approved.

A homeowner who has experienced a financial hardship within the last 36 months -- such as hardship associated with loss of a job, military service, death of a spouse, or medical problems -- may be eligible for HomeSafe Georgia assistance.

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We encourage potential eligible homeowners to attend one of the events.

Veterans Wounded Warrior Job Fair, May 5, 2015; 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM; U.S. Army Reserve Center, Building 14401, 15th & Lane Avenue, Fort Gordon

Annual Spring Hiring Event, Oakwood Career Center, May 5, 2015; 10 AM - 1 PM; 3715 Mundy Mill Road, Oakwood

Veterans Career Expo '15, May 14, 2015; 9:00 a.m. - Noon; VFW Post #2872, 835 Sunset Drive, Athens

Hank Johnson Town Hall meetings:

May 5, 2015; 6:30 - 8:00 PM; Rockdale Career Academy, 1064 Culpepper Drive, SW, Conyers

May 6, 2015; 6:30 - 8:00 PM; Snellville City Hall, 2342 Oak Road, Snellville

May 7, 2015; 6:30 - 8:00 PM; Lou Walker Senior Center, 2538 Panola Road, Lithonia

1st Annual District 5 Family Fun Day, May 23, 2015; 10 AM - 2 PM, Child, Family & Adolescent Center, 2805 Metropolitan Parkway SW, Atlanta

Churches, clubs and community organizations are encouraged to inform others about the above events and to help those without Internet access to apply for these funds. For more information, please visit www.HomeSafeGeorgia.com.



[Previous issues of The DCA Newsletter](#)



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